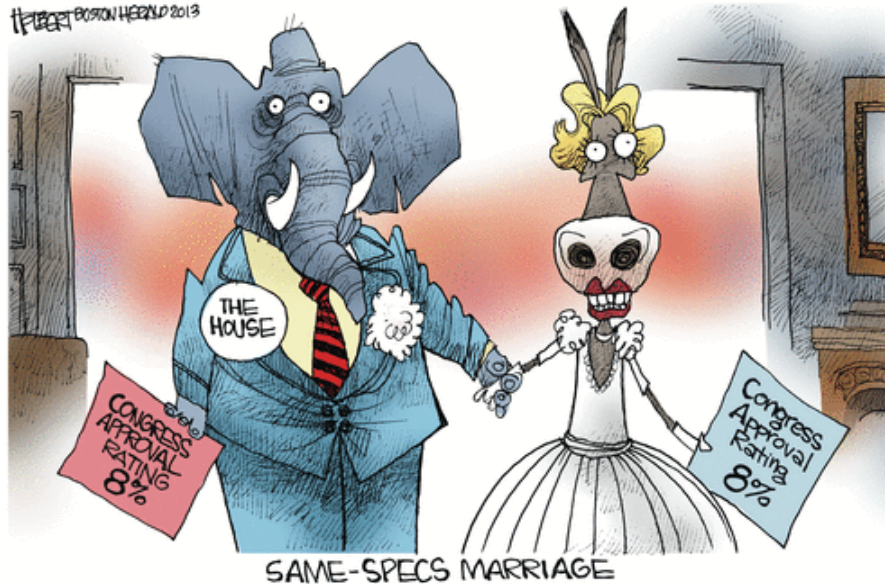


Military Resistance 11D5



Racism Propaganda 101

From: Dennis Serdel
To: Military Resistance Newsletter
Sent: April 08, 2013
Subject: Racism Propaganda 101

Written by Dennis Serdel, Vietnam 1967-68 (one tour) Light Infantry, Americal Div.
11th Brigade; United Auto Workers GM Retiree

Racism Propaganda 101

The Afghanistan Soldier has a little girl
in one arm waving a little American flag
Another Soldier lifts a little boy
to his chest, the boy hugs him & looks
with joy, arms around the Soldiers neck
as the photographer snaps away
while other children hang on the Soldiers
legs smiling feeling the American way.
There must be 15 children & 7

**American Soldiers, this is why we are here !
Cato & Heritage slip them to the Internet
& these photos go around & around
Ronald Reagan Democrats send them
to 20 friends, who each send them
to 20 friends, who send them to 20
friends, these photos make so many
so-called Conservatives convinced
that America is winning hearts & minds !
Just like Iraq, the Afghanistan War
will be won & soon it will be over !
One of the Soldiers drops to his knee
handing out candy like he was at home
on the 4th of July !
Parades will have Iraq & Afghanistan
Soldiers as the Republican & Democrats
wave little American flags
like the children in Afghanistan & Iraq !
Except that White Aryan Nation men
jump into the marching Soldiers
unloading 30 round clips into
Black, Mexican & Asian US Soldiers
then join the Parade as the crazed
Americans on each side wave
their little flags as the white American
children run into the Parade & hug
the Aryan Nation men & Soldiers
as a photographer snaps away
& Cato & Heritage slip them to the Internet
as Race Riots break out all over America
like when MLK was assassinated &
Black Vietnam Veterans found out
they were killing the wrong people
& the only Good Black Man was like MLK
& the only Good Iraqi & Afghan
was like Malcolm X.**

Written by Dennis Serdel for Military Resistance Newsletter

MORE:

Battle of Pinkville

[Dennis Serdel, April 7th 2013, about his Feb. 14th 1968]

From: Dennis Serdel

To: Military Resistance Newsletter
Subject: Battle of Pinkville
Date: Apr 7, 2013

**Written by Dennis Serdel, Vietnam 1967-68 (one tour) Light Infantry, Americal Div.
11th Brigade; United Auto Workers GM Retiree**

On the way to the Battle of Pinkville, where My Lai happened too, we took on a Regiment of VC, but at the end of the first day, we retreated, stripping our dead of any ammo, leaving them there & dug in for the night. All night we heard & felt the B-52 Bombers drop their bombs, Jets came in with Missiles & Puff The Magic Dragon came in, a C-130 with Quad - 50's. I told Dave Orndorff, who I was dug in with, that the next day was Valentine's Day & I said it could be a Valentine's Day Massacre for us. Now every year he calls me & wishes me a good Valentine's Day. We rose the next morning & began our sweep again, but during that morning, the Sarge about 30 feet from me, stepped on a landmine & I looked for cover & went back to a tree stump & was at the ready with my M-16. As the others came over, they told me not to shoot & the Medic went to the Sarge who lost a foot. I was numb & felt nothing until they asked me if I'd been hit. It was only then that I looked at my arm & leg & saw the blood and I said Yes. They took care of me & Medivacked me to Chu-Lai, from there I ended up in Japan & then returned to my Company. Us 160 Originals who were shipped over from Hawaii were glad to see me, but there wasn't that many of us left.

They said after I was wounded, the Company marched on & the B-52's didn't do anything against deep brick lined tunnels. My Company was getting killed & wounded & had to retreat to get Choppers in, to take the dead & wounded out. But soon they had to leave the dead & wounded, which Charlie killed because the VC, were shooting at the Choppers so hard, that soon the Choppers couldn't land. Out of 160 Originals, only 37 of us lived & I was one of them. The only reason I survived was because I was wounded in the early morning & the Medivack Choppers could still land & take the dead & wounded out on Feb. 14th 1968.

Dennis

DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN MILITARY SERVICE?

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AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Soldiers From Puerto Rico, California Killed Along With Oak Ridge Sergeant



Family Photo Staff Sgt. Christopher M. Ward, of Oak Ridge was killed when his convoy was attacked by a suicide car bomber in Qalat, Afghanistan, on Saturday.

April 9, 2013 By Matt Lakin, Knoxville News Sentinel

KNOXVILLE — The Department of Defense confirmed today the death of an Oak Ridge soldier killed in a weekend suicide bombing in Afghanistan.

Army Staff Sgt. Christopher M. Ward, 24, was serving with the 5th Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, of the 3rd Infantry Division's 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team.

Saturday's attack on a military convoy in southern Afghanistan killed Ward and two other soldiers — Spc. Wilbel A. Robles-Santa, 25, of Juncos, Puerto Rico, and Spc. Deflin M. Santos Jr., 24, of San Jose, Calif. — along with two civilians, one from the State Department and one from the Defense Department. Officials have given few specific details on the blast so far.

The blast also wounded Kelly Hunt, 33, a public diplomacy officer for the State Department and former part-time News Sentinel copy editor.

Hunt remained in a medically induced coma today at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany and went through surgery this morning, said her aunt, Yvonne Stahl.

“They’re taking part of the left side of her skull out right now,” the aunt said.

“They’ve got to relieve the swelling on her brain. There’s no part of her body that’s not swollen, so she’s still in very serious condition.”

Funeral arrangements for Ward, 24, remained incomplete today.

The blast interrupted a goodwill mission delivering textbooks to Afghan students in the Zabul province and marked the deadliest day for the U.S. in Afghanistan in nearly a year.

The body of Ward was flown to Dover Air Force Base in Delaware on Monday afternoon. His mother, Joyce Ward, who lives in Oak Ridge, along with his grandmother Nancy Ward and younger brother Matthew were there.

Even in high school, Chris Ward was all-Army, all the time, Nancy Ward said. He joined the Junior ROTC at DeSoto High School in Arcadia, Fla., where he stayed to finish his senior year with his grandparents after his mom and two younger brothers moved to Oak Ridge.

On Saturday night, Nancy Ward and her husband, Howard, received the call all military families dread: Their 24-year-old grandson had been killed in Afghanistan.

A car bomber set off explosives that tore through the convoy, killing the three soldiers, 25-year-old diplomat Anne Smedinghoff and a Defense Department civilian employee.

Four other State Department staffers, including Hunt, were injured in the bombing, one critically, according to a news release Monday from Secretary of State John Kerry. Family members have said Hunt was walking with Smedinghoff when the bomb went off.

Hunt, an Ohio native, worked at the newspaper from 2007 to 2009 while earning a master’s degree in international journalism from the University of Tennessee.

She joined the State Department in June 2012 and had been stationed in Kandahar as a public diplomacy officer since last summer.

**POLITICIANS REFUSE TO HALT THE
BLOODSHED**

**THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THE
WAR**

Two US “Service Members” Killed By Gerakhel Helicopter Crash



U.S. Black Hawk helicopters arrive to the scene after a U.S. helicopter crashed in a field killing two American service members, near Gerakhel, eastern Afghanistan, on April 9. Rahmat Gul/AP

4.9.13 By John Newland, Staff Writer, NBC News

Two American service members were killed in a helicopter crash Tuesday in eastern Afghanistan, the military said.

A spokesman for NATO said Tuesday that there was no enemy activity in the area when the crash occurred and that the cause was under investigation.

The helicopter went down in the Pachir Agam district of Nangarhar province, Reuters quoted Ahmad Zia Abdulzai, a spokesman for the governor's office, as saying.

Hometown Hero Laid To Rest: Fallen Soldier Marc Scialdo Remembered As Leader, Family Man

March 22, 2013 by JESSICA LIPSCOMB, Naples Daily News

In a life that lasted 31 years, Marc Scialdo made thousands of decisions, some that changed his life forever.

After the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the Collier County native chose to join the Army.

When he fell in love with a woman named Kara, they chose to marry on Nov. 11, 2011 — Veterans Day.

Even as a baby, his family believes Marc chose them.

“Marc’s soul chose us, his mother and father, for his purpose and journey in life,” his parents said in a letter read at his funeral Friday. “He was a part of a tight-knit loving family — involved parents, three siblings — who did everything together.”

Scialdo, a staff sergeant with the Army and 1999 graduate of St. John Neumann High School, was killed March 11 when a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter he was traveling in crashed in Afghanistan.

He was eulogized and buried Friday after a 10 a.m. funeral at St. John the Evangelist Parish in North Naples, where hundreds of mourners packed the church.

“So many people will say the United States of America is a great nation. It is,” said the Rev. John Ludden. “Why is it a great nation? Because people like Marc pave its destiny.”

In a letter read by Scialdo’s father-in-law, Scialdo’s wife called her four-and-a-half years with Marc “the best time of my life.”

“He was perfect for me and he always told me I was perfect for him,” she wrote. “Simply put, I loved him with all of my heart. I will always love him.”

Scialdo’s fellow soldiers called him the Italian Stallion, a father figure, a man who loved the Army so much he bled green.

“When something needed to be done, you could always count on finding Scialdo elbow-deep in an engine cowling, or grumbling as he typed away in his office,” said his platoon leader, Capt. Nick Kanakis. “Even if he didn’t like the task, Marc was always a leader who did what was needed most.

“That’s why his soldiers loved him. He never quit.”

At the end of the funeral, Brigadier Gen. John Hort presented Scialdo with a posthumous Bronze Star Medal, which is given for a heroic or meritorious achievement. He was also awarded the Global War on Terrorism Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal and the NATO International Security Assistance Force Medal.

Following the service, friends, family and some who never even knew Scialdo made their way to Palm Royale Cemetery. Men, women and children lined the streets along the route waving flags as the procession went by.

Bill Martin, an Army veteran who did not know Scialdo, said he tries to attend soldiers’ funerals when he is able to. “One is too many,” he said. “Today’s military defends our freedom by running toward the gunfire.”

Naples resident Kathleen Heinrichsberg said she came to support Scialdo's family.

"I want to thank them for sharing their son and letting us say our goodbyes," she said.

Scialdo's family sat underneath a tent while others who came to grieve him surrounded his casket. Those in attendance said an "Our Father" and paused for several moments of silence.

After "Taps" was played and the soldier was given three rifle volleys, the group of mourners backed away and Scialdo's family approached his casket.

His widow rested a red rose on top of the wood, then softly kissed her hand and touched it to the casket.

Afghan Soldier Open Fire On Lithuanian Troops, 2 Wounded

10 Apr 2013 By Ghanizada, Khaama Press

According to local authorities in western Ghor province of Afghanistan, at least two foreign soldiers forces were injured after an Afghan security service member opened fire on them.

The officials further added, the incident took place on Tuesday in Cheghcharan city.

Provincial governor spokesman Abdul Hai Khatibi confirming the report said the injured soldiers belongs to Lithuania.

He said the incident took place after an Afghan soldier called on Lithuanian troops to stop their vehicles.

According to Mr. Khatibi the Afghan soldier fired a rocket propelled grenade on the armored vehicle of the Lithuanian troops, injuring two of them.

Mr. Khatibi also added that the health condition of one of the soldier is critical and has been taken out Ghor province for treatment purposes.

The assailant Afghan soldier has reportedly been arrested and is under the investigation.

Resistance Action

09 April 2013 TOLONews & 10 April 2013 TOLONews &

Two Afghan police officers have been killed in an attack by Taliban insurgents on a checkpoint in eastern Nuristan provincial capital Monday night, local officials said.

The incident happened around 12:30am when a group of Taliban insurgents attacked a police checkpoint in Nuristan's Paroon district and clashed with the soldiers, provincial governor spokesman Mohammad Zarin told TOLONews.

"A group of Taliban insurgents attacked the checkpoint and started clashing with the unit, killing two Afghan police," Zarin said.

The Taliban insurgents also have casualties, but there is no exact information about the number, Zarin added.

A government delegation has been sent to investigate the incident and more security forces have been deployed in the area, he said.

"The Jangal military checkpoint, located in the Paroon district, is a main checkpoint which links several districts. The checkpoint is located around 10 kilometers away from the centre of the district," he added.

Nuristan borders Pakistan and has frequent clashes between insurgents and border checkpoints of Afghan security forces.

Four Afghan police officers have been killed and two more officers injured in a roadside bomb blast in south-western Nimruz province, local officials said Wednesday.

The incident took place Tuesday in Zarang, the capital of the province, when a police vehicle struck an improvised explosive device (IED) in the road, police said.

The police were travelling from Zarang to the Charbarak district in the province.

Nimruz province, which shares a border with Iran, has an active insurgency which frequently use IEDs to strike the local security forces and government personnel.

**IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE
END THE OCCUPATION**

**An Incompetent Afghan Military
Unit Accomplishes Nothing At
All:**

**“As The Men Began Loading Into
Their Vehicles To Leave, The
Dormant Village Awakened”
Villagers Who They Were Supposed
To Have Checked For Weapons Open
Fire:
Fire:
“Muzzle Flashes Began To Light Up The
Dark Mud Windows, Winging Shots At
The Departing Convoy Until It Was Clear
Of The Valley And On The Road Back To
Base”**



The mission centered on Damdara in Ganjgal Valley. The New York Times

Soon after the soldiers abandoned high ground, insurgents slipped into the vacated positions and began firing down at a pocket of soldiers, now pinned by two lines of fire. Taliban bullets whizzed through nearby fields, kicking up small clouds of dust.

April 7, 2013 By AZAM AHMED, The New York Times

DAMDARA, Afghanistan — Through the crackle of the hand radio, the Taliban fighter could be heard screaming at his comrades, berating them to strike from their mountain hide-outs and kill the infidel forces gathered nearby.

A burly Afghan Border Police commander, eavesdropping on the enemy's open-channel communication, chuckled and decided to stir things up.

"If you are a man, you don't need to yell," the commander spoke into his radio, as a circle of Afghan Army soldiers giggled. "Why don't you come out, you thief, and fight us face to face? What cave are you hiding in?"

Startled, the insurgent on the other end blurted: "I'm strong with the love of God! I'm going to heaven."

"Donkeys don't go to heaven, usually," the commander replied, stroking his henna-dyed beard, eliciting another round of laughs.

Can Afghan forces effectively fight the Taliban after the Americans are gone?

And can they gain the support of local leaders and populations who are so critical to that fight?

A recent week with a well-regarded Afghan Army unit in Kunar Province showed marked differences from the American way of war.

While the unit generally acquitted itself well in combat, logistical and political challenges were evident.

The operation in Kunar was characterized by Afghan and American military commanders as one of the biggest of its kind in the area: a search-and-clear mission centered on the village of Damdara in Ganjgal Valley, a notorious Taliban stronghold where an insurgent ambush killed nine Afghans and four of their American Marine advisers in 2009.

This time, no Americans would be in sight at any stage.

Instead, the Second Brigade of the Afghan 201st Corps, considered one of the army's best units, was leading the charge.

Army commanders coordinated with multiple police and intelligence agencies, as well as Afghan civilian officials, spending nearly a week conducting reconnaissance and drawing up elaborate terrain models to prepare for the mission.

The terrain would play a major role this day.

Ganjgal Valley is picturesque, but treacherous, with high ridges arrayed in a horseshoe around the village, perfect for shielding ambushes.

Cut into the hills that lead up to the mountains are terraced fields, dry and brittle with small green shoots peeking through the soil. Stones cover the base of the valley like the bed of a river.

More than 350 Afghan security force members gathered around the perimeter, some given the task of searching the village for fighters and weapons, other assigned to the ridges to confront any ambushes at eye level.

They did not have to wait long.

The forces in the heights came under fire almost immediately from an opposing ridgeline northwest of the village — the one vantage point the army did not control. Dozens of fighters were firing.

Soldiers responded with vehicle-mounted guns. A team shot artillery onto the insurgent mountainside with mixed accuracy, sending up plumes of smoke into the clear sky. The rhythm of a long-range battle took hold, the shots less frequent as each side squinted to find enemies on ridges about a half-mile apart.

It was during this impasse that the war of words erupted into the Taliban's radio patter. As Afghan soldiers drew around to listen, the conversation between the two enemies grew even more insulting and acrimonious.

The insurgent called the commander "a slave of the infidels."

"You didn't even have pants on when I was a good Muslim and mujahid," the commander replied. "You are a slave of the Punjabis," he added, referencing Pakistani support for the Taliban. "Where did you get your ammunition, you donkey? Do you have a bullet factory up there?"

As the day wore on, a line of villagers snaked through the valley toward a meeting with assembled Afghan government officials.

The district governor, Mohammad Hanif Khairkhwa, apologized for bothering them and asked whether the Afghan forces had mistreated anyone. The villagers, resting on their haunches and wrapped in earth-tone shawls, said they had not.

The government had tried before to draw support away from the Taliban here, with only modest success. Now, in making his case, Mr. Khairkhwa drew on their similarities, speaking Afghan to Afghan while turning the absence of American forces into a new chance for cooperation.

"We are from the same country, the same region, we speak the same language and share the same faith," he said. "Do you see any foreigners here? It's just us."

Promising that Afghan forces would be visiting the valley again, the governor left them with a warning: "Tell the insurgents, 'Don't shoot from my house.' Tell them, 'Don't lay mines near my house.' If you do not, then next time, you cannot complain about what happens."

The villagers trekked back to the village, a series of mud homes seemingly carved into the earth.

An old man with deep blue eyes and a wispy white beard began muttering under his breath as he hobbled off. "If the government people bother us, they will be held accountable by God," he said.

Overhearing the comment, one intelligence official shouted back: "You think we are bothering you? Who do you think is shooting at us every day? If you shoot one of us, God will send you to hell."

Farther down the valley, a row of Humvees near the front of the fight belted streams of bullets into the enemy-held mountainside.

A Taliban sniper hiding in the dense forest above fired single shots back at the troops on the valley's floor. The village remained dormant.

"They shoot at us like thieves, so we have to shoot back with force," said Sgt. Hedyatullah Tanha, 22, a platoon commander. "If we don't return fire they will have a long period of time to line up another shot."

Capt. Wahidullah Atifi, a company commander, said constant fighting had sharpened his men, while armored vehicles and extra training had bolstered their confidence.

"The only bad habit my unit has is that they respond to a single shot with a volley of bullets," he said.

Amid the clamor of gunshots, Captain Atifi's cellphone rang. A senior commander urged him to keep his men from shooting so much.

Captain Atifi shrugged and then sounded a note growing more common among Afghan commanders as they ponder future battles without American air support: "If we had an attack helicopter," he said, "the fight would be over."

In reality, if things had gone smoothly, the fight may never have happened in the first place. The army battalion commander had squashed earlier plans for a special unit to take the ridge that later became the Taliban stronghold.

Communication proved to be an obstacle, too. The patchwork of Afghan forces, including border, national and local police, were using different radios, inhibiting communication. To compensate, everyone used cellphones.

By 1:30 p.m., the search of the village concluded, turning up a handful of .50-caliber shells plucked from the floor of an old man's home.

Soldiers began to trail down from the village.

As planned, those along the ridgeline began to collapse their positions and make their way down the mountain, covering one another's exits. After hours of sporadic fighting, all were alive and accounted for, officers said.

Then, a stutter of gunfire erupted as the Taliban exploited their vulnerability.

Soon after the soldiers abandoned high ground, insurgents slipped into the vacated positions and began firing down at a pocket of soldiers, now pinned by two lines of fire.

A dozen men piled into four Humvees and raced down the rugged dirt path to the base of the mountain, hoping to ease the enemy assault long enough to break the soldiers free.

The frequency of the gunfire intensified, echoing across the valley in tidy snaps.

Twenty minutes later, the convoy reappeared, bringing with it the trapped soldiers, all alive.

Taliban bullets whizzed through nearby fields, kicking up small clouds of dust.

As the men began loading into their vehicles to leave, the dormant village awakened.

Muzzle flashes began to light up the dark mud windows, winging shots at the departing convoy until it was clear of the valley and on the road back to base.

MORE:

[Pissing In The Wind Part 2]

“The Taliban Will Be Back”

**“‘They Know We Will Leave,’ Said
Badakshani, The Executive
Officer”**

**“When They See Us, They Put Down
Their Guns And Pick Up Shovels And
Tell Us They Are Farmers”**

“Then They Pick Up Their Guns Again”



THE WASHINGTON POST

“The Afghan and American soldiers were not able to establish their control in the past 12 years in any part of the valley,” said Taliban spokesman Qari Mohammad Yousuf.

“Their presence on the road was temporary. . . . They cannot keep their forces there for long.”

April 7, 2013 By Kevin Sieff, The Washington Post. Mohammed Sharif contributed to this report. [Excerpts]

In TANGI VALLEY, AFGHANISTAN —

When the first Afghan soldiers arrived at the mouth of the Tangi Valley last week, they saw a Taliban flag waving over a towering bluff. They had entered a sliver of their own country that did not belong to them, beginning one of the most daunting missions in the short history of the Afghan army.

They climbed to the rocky peak and plucked the enemy’s flag from the ground.

That’s when the first makeshift bomb exploded, a booby trap that blew the men off their feet and threw a plume of dust and smoke and fire into the air.

It was an early confirmation of what Afghan and U.S. troops already knew: The Tangi is not just another insurgent haven.

It is the site of the deadliest attack endured by the U.S. military in Afghanistan and one of the biggest staging grounds for assaults on Kabul, just 60 miles away.

But what was the Afghan army doing there?

The American military had given up on securing the valley two years earlier.

Neither American nor Afghan military leaders thought Afghan security forces had the capacity to set up permanent positions there, deeming the Taliban's sanctuary all but unshakable, regardless of the operation's outcome. **[Got that right. See below.]**

In over a decade of war, the United States failed to destroy a patchwork of Taliban havens, leaving an untested Afghan army to either let those sanctuaries fester or make bold — but perhaps inconsequential — efforts to disturb them. **[Got that right. See below.]**

As the Afghan military attempts to prove its own strength without American combat support, the Tangi appeared to be the perfect mission — a chance to do what the U.S. military could not.

For the 1,027 Afghan soldiers who entered the Tangi in early April, the threats would be unrelenting.

By the time they left after four long days, more than 40 makeshift bombs had detonated. The valley was peppered with Taliban madrassas, they would learn, and homes from which fighters emerged firing machine guns and rockets. Clinics once funded by Western aid agencies had been emblazoned with Taliban slogans. Former U.S. bases had been rigged with land mines.

“Terrorists own the Tangi,” said Col. Sami Badakshani, the executive officer of the Afghan army's 4th Brigade. “The American military left. The Afghan government left. Because of that negligence, it is like this.”

American troops were surprised to learn of the Afghan army's plans just one day before the operation was due to start.

They rushed to get air support and surveillance drones into the area, sending about a dozen advisers to an outpost overlooking the valley. But no U.S. soldiers would enter the Tangi. (A Washington Post reporter and photographer were the only Americans there.)

The days of large-scale joint combat operations are over in Afghanistan, particularly in places where the U.S. military questions the long-term value of dangerous missions.

This time, the Afghan army, fledgling but ambitious, would be on its own — the first non-Taliban combatants to enter the valley in over two years.

The soldiers regrouped after the first explosion, which left them with only minor injuries. They were chastised by one of their battalion commanders.

The men should have known better, said Col. Mohammed Daowood. The Taliban often attach makeshift bombs to flags, in case the enemy should attempt to remove them.

“These guys — what are they doing?” Daowood said. “We cannot lose this battle before it starts.”

The troops continued pouring into the narrow valley, with some walking along the ridgeline and others taking the main road — a key throughway between Wardak and

Logar provinces, paved by Americans but untraversed because of the Taliban's dominance.

In 2009, the U.S. military dubbed it "IED alley."

Immediately, the first units began digging for explosive devices.

The troops had none of the U.S. military's sophisticated equipment. Their jammers, which disable remote-controlled bombs, were mostly broken. The men used their eyes and pickaxes and shovels, uncovering massive homemade mines every 15 feet and lifting them from the ground with bare hands.

One by one, they carried the mines away from the road and buried them in the ground before detonating them, shattering the windows of Tangi homes.

Any of the explosive devices would have torn through the soft-skin Ford Rangers with which the Afghan army is outfitted.

The first minutes of the mission were cluttered with such markers of an invisible enemy — first the roadside bombs and then sniper fire that echoed across the valley. The Tangi is narrow enough to act as a rocky amphitheater, and the sounds of the clash thundered between mountains until it was unclear where the bullets were coming from.

By the time the first lobby of gunfire stopped, two soldiers were shot, one in the neck and one in the leg. Just before he passed out, the man shot in the neck screamed, "I am not scared of the Taliban!"

But the commanders disagreed about whether the soldiers were in fact shot by insurgents. Daowood said it was friendly fire — the product of disorganization and soldiers that, from a distance, mistook their allies for enemies. Another battalion commander screamed that it was a Taliban sniper firing from a perch above them.

While the two argued, more gunfire rang out. A bomb exploded.

The issue still unresolved, the commanders continued further into the valley, their men scattering toward villages that almost certainly harbored more enemy fighters.

They had not heard about the information contained in an American intelligence report delivered the previous night: 200 insurgents had snuck into the village, ostensibly to defend their sanctuary.

Disparities between Afghan and U.S. military doctrine could be seen everywhere. Daowood walked next to a man with a ski mask and oversize sunglasses covering his face.

The man said he was a former Talib from the Tangi who accepted money from Daowood to work as an informant. No one in the unit had ever seen him before. Some worried he was a double agent.

He pointed to makeshift bombs that no one else saw, with wires that snaked toward distant trees so insurgents could trigger the devices without being seen.

When asked how he found them, he pulled down his bandanna and smiled. "I'm a professional," he said.

Other commanders had their own spies who led them around the detritus of aid efforts usurped by the Taliban: bridges built with U.S. funds, a clinic funded by the Swedish Committee, a mosque built by the government of Kuwait.

For the soldiers, it was like discovering a lost world in which the Taliban's shadow government finally took physical shape. In between firefights, they took photos of each other standing in front of Taliban buildings, straddling motorcycles that belonged to suspected insurgent commanders.

The tempo picked up quickly as they continued into the valley. The soldiers burst through doors and into small markets where men sat quietly and waited to be questioned.

"What are you doing here?" Sgt. Falak Naaz said. "What does your father do? Do you know where the Taliban commanders are?"

Almost all of the men shrugged.

They were farmers, they said, or shopkeepers.

They did not know any Talibs. Meanwhile, the Taliban's alternate title, "the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan," was scrawled over everything.

A Taliban madrassa included piles of paperwork from the insurgency's own education department, including a mandate that students keep their beards long.

The Afghan commanders knew they were being lied to.

"When they see us, they put down their guns and pick up shovels and tell us they are farmers," Daowood said. "Then they pick up their guns again."

When the battalion entered the village of Hassankhel, gunfire came from all directions.

On the ridgeline, there was no Afghan army presence to support the soldiers fighting in the village.

"Where's our cover? These soldiers are lazy and scared. Where is their commander!?" Daowood screamed.

When the firefight ended, two soldiers carried a lieutenant, Mustafa, from one of the mud-brick village homes. He was shot in the stomach and bleeding badly.

His platoon commander, Capt. Rahim Sadeq, looked around frantically. The Afghan army's medevac capacity is notoriously underdeveloped. Out of desperation, the

platoon commander asked a Post reporter to call for an American helicopter. (He had no such ability.)

Instead, the soldiers stole a wheelbarrow from a local farmer and lifted Lt. Mustafa into it. They raced out of the valley.

What happened next confused American and Afghan troops involved in the Tangi operation. U.S. forces agreed to loan the Afghans a helicopter for the medevac, but after 40 minutes of waiting, as Mustafa bled, the Afghan Defense Ministry denied the request.

“It was baffling,” said one U.S. adviser.

Mustafa, who like many Afghans uses only one name, made it to a Kabul hospital by road. He is recovering.

But the frustration of being abandoned without air medevac has taken its toll on the Afghan army. Last month, a soldier in Wardak waited 24 hours for an air medevac. He bled to death.

“We had to watch a man die for no reason,” said Gen. Abdul Raziq, the 4th Brigade commander.

As Mustafa was wheeled away, the soldiers gathered about 20 suspected insurgents. The soldiers punched them on the back and slapped them in the face. The two main suspects were blindfolded and handcuffed using pieces of a scarf.

“You are tools of Pakistan!” one soldier screamed.

“You are worthless Talibs,” said another.

The men stood for 20 minutes waiting for their punishment.

Daowood launched into an impassioned speech. For a long time, it remained unclear whether the men would be beaten, released or detained.

“There are no Americans here, just Muslims. Why did you shoot our Muslim soldier?” he asked.

There was no response. Then Daowood abruptly shoed all the men away, including the two who had been in the same house as Mustafa’s shooter, who apparently fled.

Another battalion took a different approach with a suspect they apprehended during a firefight, parading the slow-talking, shifty-eyed man named Wazir around the Tangi in handcuffs. Then they drove him to the operation headquarters outside the valley, where American advisers and Afghan officers gawked at him.

A few U.S. soldiers snapped photos of the man, with his bloodstained shirt, and were immediately reprimanded. It was the closest they would get to the battle.

“You are violating coalition policy!” screamed Lt. Col. John Allen. “Turn in your cameras.”

The Americans, heads down, handed over their digital cameras. The Afghans continued tugging at the detainee's beard and asking him questions he did not understand or pretended not to hear.

By the third day, insurgent opposition had mostly faded.

Soldiers were still uprooting makeshift bombs, but none had detonated under their vehicles. All of the wounded looked as if they would survive. The mood grew increasingly buoyant.

Daowood's battalion surged further into the valley in their pickups, racing over a road that had not yet been checked for mines.

Soldiers charged into a house they said belonged to a Taliban commander and made themselves tea. They lay their findings on the grass: rocket-propelled grenades, rifles and several Afghan army uniforms that could be used for sneaking into the enemy's ranks.

For the first time in more than two years, they saw their old outpost that had been overrun. The Taliban had shot a video of dozens of fighters entering the base on motorcycles, waving Kalashnikovs in the air.

On this day, though, the streets were quiet. Just one old man shuffled toward the troops and berated them as they made their way toward the outpost.

"You invited everyone here — the Americans, the Europeans," he said. "It's a betrayal."

The Afghan troops responded as they did all week. The Americans are gone. Blaming foreign intruders no longer made sense.

"This is an Afghan mission," Sadeq said.

The soldiers walked into an old USAID-funded clinic, where, amid the celebration, one local man whispered his thoughts about the futility of the Afghan National Army operation.

"It doesn't matter if the Taliban or the ANA is here. They are both good with us," he said, before pausing.

"The Taliban will be back."

Afghan soldiers knew that to be true, too.

During the peak of the U.S. military surge here, American commanders pushed into Taliban strongholds and stayed there.

But the Afghans do not have the money or manpower to set up a string of new outposts in the Tangi.

Before packing their bags, the Afghan soldiers watched many of the men who they had briefly detained strolling around the villages of Tangi.

“They’re all Talibs,” said Naaz, the sergeant, scowling at the men.

“They know we will leave,” said Badakshani, the executive officer.

After the sunset Thursday, the Afghan soldiers poured out of the valley.

Some of the soldiers carried souvenirs from their trip into the Tangi.

One man stole a bandage from a confiscated Taliban medical kit and used it to wrap a bleeding finger.

The American advisers left the small shipping container from which they had been tracking their advisees’ progress.

Twelve hours later, according to locals in the Tangi, the Taliban reemerged.

About 200 to 300 insurgents returned from nearby villages, they said.

Some merely stepped out of the homes in which they had been hiding.

Many of them carried Kalashnikovs in public view.

Taliban officials denied that the Afghan operation had changed anything, saying the valley would remain under their power forever.

“The Afghan and American soldiers were not able to establish their control in the past 12 years in any part of the valley,” said Taliban spokesman Qari Mohammad Yousuf.

“Their presence on the road was temporary. . . . They cannot keep their forces there for long.”

SOMALIA WAR REPORTS

Somalia President Admits Rapes By Government Troops: Insurgents Were Blamed For Attacks

10 April 2013 Shabelle Media Network

After months of denial, Somalia's government has for the first time acknowledged that its security forces were involved in rape cases that drew an international outcry by human rights groups.

Army commanders often denied accusations that soldiers were involved in a spate of rapes, blaming the crimes on the Islamic extremist rebels of al-Shabab who wore army uniforms to smear the reputation of the military.

President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, while speaking to military cadets at a training camp in Mogadishu on Monday, said that security forces who rape and rob our citizens must be fought and be defeated just like al-Shabab.

He said his government would fight those who rape as he'd fight al-Shabab, the Al-Qaeda-linked rebel group fighting his government and the African Union forces in Somalia.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS



“At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh had I the ability, and could reach the nation’s ear, I would, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke.

“For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder.

“We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake.”

“The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppose.”

Frederick Douglass, 1852

**Hope for change doesn't cut it when you're still losing buddies.
-- J.D. Englehart, Iraq Veterans Against The War**

“Revellers Spray A Bottle Of Champagne As They Celebrate The Death Of Former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher”



Revellers spray a bottle of champagne as they celebrate the death of former British prime minister Margaret Thatcher, at George Square in Glasgow, Scotland April 8, 2013. Margaret Thatcher, the "Iron Lady" who transformed Britain and inspired conservatives around the world by radically rolling back the state during her 11 years in power, died on Monday following a stroke. She was 87. REUTERS/David Moir

**Hello Baseball, Goodbye Brain:
“Being A Cubs Fan Armors Me
Slightly Against The Democrats
Betraying Us Yet Again. Like The
Cubs They Do It To Us Year After
Year”**

**“The Point Is, That’s What Democratic
Presidents Do, Enact Republican
Platforms While We Remain In A State Of
Liberal Narcosis”**

I have great respect for the former labor secretary Robert Reich but is he ever wrong when he protests, ””Mr. President...a cut to Social Security benefits that would hurt seniors – it’s an idea not befitting a Democratic president.”

Oh, Mr Reich, the point is, that’s what Democratic presidents do, enact Republican platforms while we remain in a state of liberal narcosis.

April 08, 2013 by CLANCY SIGAL, Counterpunch

CLANCY SIGAL is a novelist and screenwriter in Los Angeles.

His latest book, Hemingway Lives!, will be published this spring by OR Books. He can be reached at clancy@jsasoc.com. His web site is clancysigal.com

The opening day of the major league baseball season is when I start to live again until October when pro basketball and NFL football take over and the fan in me goes into a long winter sleep.

I’m not a full-time fan of anything I haven’t tried to play. (Hence no ice hockey or lacrosse.)

Traumatically, when it dawned on me as a kid that I wasn’t going to be the next Chicago Cubs pitching whiz – yes, the all-time loser Cubs! – I beamed myself down to being a mere avid spectator, first at live games at Wrigley, Ebbets and Chavez Ravine’s Dodger field, now couch-potatoing on TV.

Spectating has its own peculiar thrills.

Even though I'm not a Dodger fan, just a follower, Clayton Kershaw's opening day, extraordinary eighth inning home run to break a tie against arch-rival Giants was something, if only to watch him scamper around the bases as if he expected to be arrested at any moment.

Everyone including ace Kershaw knows pitchers can't hit, right? (It was his first and perhaps last career homer.)

Being a Chicago Cubs fanatic – they haven't won a World Series in 104 years and their last pennant was in 1945 – means you learn valuable lessons early.

Such as, the virtue of stoicism in the face of defeat, and the meaning of inevitable tragedy. It's a loser's world, and the sooner you learn this the better.

And, if anyone has forgotten what playthings we are of Tyche, the Greek goddess of luck, there's the notorious incident when a young over-enthusiastic Cub fan, Steve Bartman, reached down from the stands to brazenly interfere with left fielder Moses Alou's catch of a foul ball thus ruining the club's pennant hopes in 2003.

(In Chicago Bartman and the umpire who made the bad call rank somewhere between Judas and Benedict Arnold; for a long time young Bartman had police protection, probably against fans like me.)

Even rabid fans know in their hearts that their games have been stolen from them by Borgia-like owners, agents, out-of-sight player salaries, all-round greed, and "performance enhancements" (dope) not to speak of the ever moveable strike zone.

So we take refuge in backward looking nostalgia, by mentally downloading images of the Cardinals' "Stan the Man" Musial's amazing hitting history, Pittsburgh Steeler Lynn Swann's ballet-like catches, and a far-gone time when Jews not African Americans dominated basketball, and Jackie Robinson's super-aggressive base stealing. And also when the geographic frontier of major league baseball extended no further than Chicago and St Louis.

To this day I can't get it up for the expansion teams. The Toronto what?

Just as well baseball comes along this year to divert me from the unutterably boring political game where, unlike an election year, the important stuff gets done in incomprehensible language at committees behind closed doors.

"Chained CPI" anybody?

Last year it was temporarily exciting to watch Obama kick Romney's ass at the polling booth; how deflating it is to see him, holding a strong poker hand, blow it with his parroting the Republican line about "entitlements".

To prepare us for the shock just before he unwraps his next budget, he's sending up flaming trial balloons to see how much beating-up we will take, such as his crazy idea of cutting Social Security by \$112 billion over the next decade.

Being a Cubs fan armors me slightly against the Democrats betraying us yet again. Like the Cubs they do it to us year after year.

I tune into Rachel Maddow and she's still at it, robot-like, gabble gabble, drawing our attention to the Republican corpse rather than to the crimes of cowardice of her darling, weak-kneed, insufferably corrupt Democrats who can do no wrong on MSNBC.

Only ever-reliable Fox News refuses to concede, and that's refreshing. The rightwingers have it right: never retreat, never apologize, keep banging on that old drum no matter. Maybe Roger Ailes and his gang are the true Cubs-in-spirit fans.

Yes, Obama is "good" about guns, promoting women, gay marriage – full marks to him.

But on the only two inter-related issues that really matter, our economic impoverishment and funding unnecessary wars, he is the best Republican liberal we voted for.

The fix is in. Obama is the most skillful three-card monte trickster in the Oval Office since Reagan, and without a real enemy, the GOP piñata, to hit and hit again, most of us have subsided like me into spectators rather than active fans.

Is it subversive to suggest that gun-control and gay marriage are...side issues...compared to Obama being our "food stamp president" with a record high of 47 million Americans now dependent on welfare; one in four children going hungry if not for (and perhaps even with) food stamps; the whittling away of Medicare and Social Security disability – in other words the Democrats and Obama undermining our safety net while prattling on about the false issue of "deficit spending".

Washington's policies are directly responsible for the crushing meth plague in rural America, triggered by farm disasters and small town factory closures.

I have great respect for the former labor secretary Robert Reich but is he ever wrong when he protests, ""Mr. President...a cut to Social Security benefits that would hurt seniors – it's an idea not befitting a Democratic president."

Oh, Mr Reich, the point is, that's what Democratic presidents do, enact Republican platforms while we remain in a state of liberal narcosis.

Meanwhile, Obama's favorite executioner, former senator Alan Simpson, axe in hand, co-chair of the presidential "budget commission", calls people like me, indeed all Americans who unlike him don't have a 50-year career on the public dole, as "the greediest generation".

Instead of fixing on what's important we run around fixing this or protesting that – which is great, it keeps us alive as participating citizens.

But the fact remains that it is in both parties' interest to three-card shuffle us into a kind of distracted boredom which helps explain the astonishing popularity of professional sports today.

We know every detail of Kevin Ware's gruesome basketball injury and Tiger Woods dating Lindsay Vonn, and the Rutgers coach who pulverized his scholarship players, and the scandal-ridden National Collegiate Athletic Association's ruthless exploitation of young athletes.

And, if we're truly alert fans, the high school, collegiate and professional athletes' rape culture.

But since pols like Alan Simpson don't dunk in Nike trainers we're blind and deaf to his nastiness.

So I look forward to this baseball season even if I still don't really understand "wild card" playoffs, the same way I've never got the offside rule in pro soccer.

This season keep your eye on the Cubs' Dominican-born shortstop Starlin Castro who will – I promise!- take us to the World Series not next but THIS year.

And pray for a miracle that, in time to raise a rumpus, we take one tiny part of our sports-obsessed brain and refocus on how and why our money is being stolen not at the corporate sports stadium but at the corporate White House.

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Cases Of Medically Non-Redeployable Soldiers On The Rise: “For These Soldiers, Especially Those With Multiple Deployments, The Prospect Of Redeploying To What Author Sebastian Junger Called ‘The Petty Tyrannies Of Garrison Life’ Is A Nerve-Wracking One”



7 April 2013 by Bravo, The Duffel Blog

FORT SAM HOUSTON, TX – With the drawdown in Afghanistan approaching, the Army is experiencing an unexpected surge in soldiers being declared medically ineligible for redeployment to garrison, the Army Medical Command announced.

“It’s a disturbing trend,” said Lt. Gen. Patricia Horoho, U.S. Army Surgeon General. “We need to be able to maintain our uprange force posture, and now we’re seeing large numbers of soldiers who are either unable or unwilling to redeploy in support of garrison operations.”

Medical symptoms and conditions vary from case to case, but in each instance, said Horoho, “the result is the same – we’re seeing an awful lot of soldiers being taken out of the non-fight.”

For example, one soldier was found to have developed an extremely severe allergic reaction to the specific type of fabrics and dyes used in the Army Combat Uniform’s Universal Camouflage Pattern, after spending his entire deployment wearing the MultiCam uniform.

Another soldier was placed on a permanent medically non-redeployable profile after a mental-health evaluation linked his severe psychotic episodes, which he suffered whenever he was subjected to any sort of group-formation environment, to post-retarded stupidity disorder, or PRSD — a growing condition among redeployed soldiers.

Another notable case was published in “Sick Call Ranger,” a quarterly military medical journal.

“These things are happening at an alarming rate,” said Horoho to reporters. “The piece in Ranger highlighted a soldier that was placed on permanent profile after it was

determined that the notes of 'Reveille' created a harmonic vibration in the soldier's knee joints, causing painful inflammation."

Many Army physicians say they worry that the rise in the number of medically non-redeployable soldiers may adversely affect the Army's uprange capabilities.

There is suspicion among senior military leadership that some soldiers may be abusing a medically non-redeployable profile to stay downrange and avoid being redeployed to a garrison environment.

After all, many soldiers say they find life in a downrange environment liberating, free of much of the stultifying, structured aspects of life in the rear.

For these soldiers, especially those with multiple deployments, the prospect of redeploying to what author Sebastian Junger called "the petty tyrannies of garrison life" is a nerve-wracking one.

"I'll be honest, it scares the hell out of me," said Specialist Brandon Kaiser, of 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, 3rd BCT, 101st Airborne Division.

"I mean, getting shot at and blown up I can deal with. I mean, here I get to live like an actual adult, not some idiot kid who needs his hand held all the time.

"Now they want me to go to a place where people tell me when to wake up, when to eat, when to shower, I'd have to do organized PT, and they'd make me do pushups for not shaving or having my trousers unbloused? I still get panic attacks and flashbacks from my last 24-month redeployment whenever anyone calls drill and ceremony commands."

One soldier, speaking on condition of anonymity, explained that he sought to be placed on a medically non-redeployable profile because, "I felt like there was no other way I could justify myself to my battle buddies when they asked why I wasn't redeploying with them. I felt like such a dirtbag, watching everyone else redeploy while I stayed behind on forward-D, but I just couldn't do it, I couldn't go back there again, I couldn't deal with all the uprange B.S. anymore."

"We can't afford to have dead weight in the ranks these days," said Horoho.

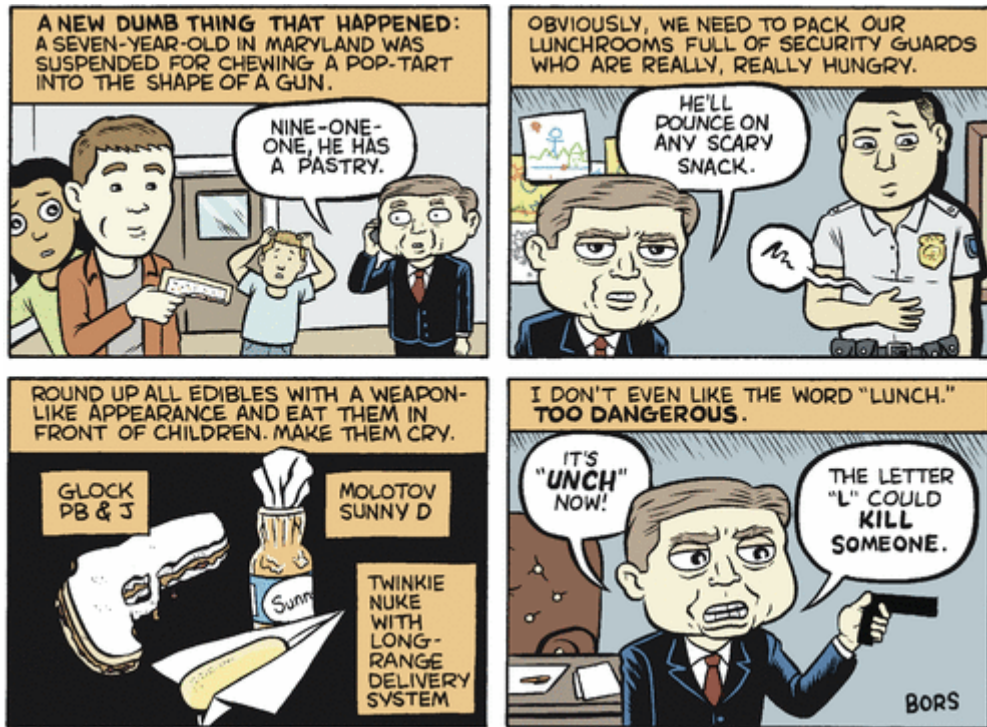
"The Army's looking to cut, and the first place they're gonna look is soldiers who we can't take uprange with us. It's like a boat anchor on our non-readiness."

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DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



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